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Chairs of the Appropriations Committee Senators Osten and Formica and Representative Walker and Committee Members:

My name is Linda Benoit and I reside in the town of Plainville. I am writing to you because I wanted to let you know the importance of retaining funding to support Plainville's Family Resource Network. The Family Resource Network is a valuable asset to our town that contributes to creating a meaningful relationship with parents, students, teachers and the community.

I first became connected with the Family Resource Network after attending the Play and Learn Group with my first son. I found this program to be extremely useful for my family. It provides educational expertise, guidance, learning opportunity for both myself and my sons along with community experiences.

As a mother of two toddlers, I have seen the value of the Play and Learn Group. From participating in the play and learn group, I can see personal growth in both of my sons. My husband and I have observed growth in our children's socialization and language skills. My sons also have had opportunities to visit the Plainville Fire Station and learn about fire safety, play in a drum circle, visit a farm and tour a grocery store, all of which was made possible by the Family Resource Network.

The Family Resource Network offers many programs to help parents prepare their children for school. One of the programs that I found extremely useful is called Conscious Discipline. This program teaches parents, educators and caregivers skills on how to discipline children respectfully. As a former teacher who has experienced first hand the disruption that some children can create in a classroom, I found that this program is helpful for all educators. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to learn a new set of skills to use with my own children and future students. This class gave me the confidence to know that when I encounter a negative situation with a child, I will have the skills to defuse the problem in a respectful way.

I believe that having the Family Resource Network gives families a place to connect with educators and form a partnership with their school district early on in their child's life, which is often maintained as their child continues his/her educational career. I am urging you to support the continuation of the Family Resource Network. By doing so you will be giving more opportunities for more families to work with our schools and over all make our community a great place to live and raise a family.

Sincerely,

Linda Benoit